

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for providing security with respect to who provided digital data at what time, said method comprising the steps of:

performing a serially chained certification process including:

a) forming a first interval certification at a first server including the server's identification, the start time of an interval chain in UTC, the start time of the interval in UTC, the stop time of the interval, a public key for the interval, a digital signature for the interval, signed by a previous interval's private key, and a digital signature for the interval, signed by the interval's private key;

(b) upon expiration of the first interval, destroying its private key;

c) continuing steps (a) and (b) for second, third, and following

intervals so that intervals are cross-chained with other servers to form a widely witnessed, temporal web of signed intervals of time;

encoding certification information in graphical form to form an indicia that relates to the authenticity of the document.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:

decoding the indicia to authenticate a document.